

February 12, 1970

Mrs. L. M. Roberson
1817 Gately Drive
Richmond, Va. 23233

Dear Mrs. Roberson,

I am afraid that the information you already have about the prospects for specific treatment of Cri-Du-Chat is already dismally accurate. As with many other diseases we may have reasonable hopes of better approaches to these kinds of problems in the next ten or twenty years. Even then I am sure that our most successful efforts will concern the prevention of genetic diseases and in some cases treatments that might be usefully applied during pregnancy. At some time in the future we may also be able to do routine chromosome screening very early in pregnancy and thus open the possibility of a preventive abortion, which most reasonable people will already accept as the lesser of the possible evils.

You do, however, raise a very reasonable question in asking about the chances of contacting parents with similar afflictions. I have two suggestions for you, if your own medical consultant does not already have an answer. One would be to contact Professor Robert Cooke at the Department of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore. The other would be to write to Dr. Daniel Bergsma at the National Foundation (Birth Defects), 800 Second Avenue, New York 10017. I think it is important that you specifically ask about your wish to communicate with other parents or you will probably again divert them into trying to give you the information you already have about the prospects for treatment.

If you have not already done so, you really should try first to talk to Dr. R.D. Young in Pediatrics at the Medical College of Virginia right in Richmond.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr